941·5
Rus/Thi
27492

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
Royal Asiatic Society.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 June, 2018

THE STATE OF IRELAND.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

A THIRD LETTER

TO THE RIGHT HON.

CHICHESTER FORTESCUE, M.P.

ON

THE STATE OF IRELAND.

27492

BY

JOHN EARL RUSSELL.

'LET RIGHT BE DONE.'

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1869.

00027492

THIRD LETTER.

My dear Fortescue,

The time has come when the mere assertion of principles is no longer sufficient, and it behoves a Liberal Government to introduce large measures for the good of Ireland. Happily, we are not, as in 1778, engaged at once in a foreign and a civil war; nor, as in 1792, on the brink of the crater of the French Revolution; nor, as in 1829, in the alarm of an approaching insurrection. We have firm ground whereon to plant our feet; and we ought therefore to advance boldly on our path, and to complete the edifice which we have been so long in constructing until it becomes an enduring temple, sacred to Concord and to Liberty.

You know your own country so well, and your views are formed on such just principles, that I have no fears that you should mistake the symptoms of the disease from which she suffers. But the people of England are not so well informed, and no pains ought to be omitted in placing before them all the elements of the judgment which their representatives will have to pronounce.

Astronomers have calculated the time in which light travels from our globe to distant stars, and have amused themselves by imagining each ray of light to convey to their inhabitants an image of the events taking place here on its departure; so that an observer in one of those remote worlds may be now lamenting over the imprisonment of Galileo, or beholding with affright the reeking scaffolds of the Reign of Terror.

Thus it seems to be with the light of knowledge in regard to some of the districts of our country. An elector of Middlesex votes against the Liberal candidates because he sees the fires of Smithfield still blazing, and the Grand Armada approaching our shores. A brave Protestant in the north of Ireland prepares himself to fight over again the Battle of the Boyne, and to repel the invasion of James II. This temper, as it existed in 1832, is well described by the late Archbishop Whately:—

> Here *parcere subjectis* is unknown. They are never weary of tyrannising over the conquered. The very name of Orangeman is a sign. It is chosen *on purpose* to keep up the memory of a civil war, which every friend of humanity would wish to bury in oblivion. It is doing what among the heathens was reckoned an accursed deed—keeping a trophy in repair.*

Such being the state of the uninformed mind in the counties of England, and of over-heated passions in the north of Ireland, it is impossible, in considering what should be done now, not to refer to some his-

* *Life of Whately*, vol. i. p. 127. Nov. 19, 1832.

torical facts, and to the judgments pronounced upon them by men of intelligence to enlighten, and power to direct, the State. This will help us to ascertain what are our duties to the Irish people, according not to the letter merely but to the spirit of the Act of Union.

Let us begin by dispelling the mist of some prevailing errors.

The first of these errors, to call it by no worse name, is the accusation brought against Mr. Gladstone that he has stirred this Irish question solely with a view to facilitate his own return to office. However loud this cry, and however common among violent men of the Tory party, my judgment leads me to a totally opposite conclusion. As a looker-on I should have said, 'If Mr. Gladstone wishes simply to return to office, his policy is very obvious. He may rely on the strength of the Liberal party in the new Parliament; he may lay stress upon the obvious absurdities, vexations, and ignorance, developed in the rating clauses of the new Reform Act; he may dilate on the extravagance of Lord Derby's Administration, and invite the House of Commons to pass a censure upon their wasteful expenditure. He may propose a direct vote of "want of confidence." By these ways, or by any one of them, he will obtain an easy victory, and when secure in office, he may deal as he thinks right with Ireland. But if his object be office, he will carefully abstain from declaring, in Opposition, an Irish policy. If he brings forward the question of the Irish Church,

he is pretty sure to alienate the more timid of the Whig party, and quite sure to give his opponents a cry, a flag, and a bond of union—three things of which they are greatly in need.

'But if Mr. Gladstone, raising his eyes above the exigencies of party, and the desire for official station, should aspire to perform a permanent and immortal service to his country; if he should make it his object to reconcile England and Ireland, which for three hundred years have not been reconciled; if he should seek to remove the last remaining link of the fetters fastened by the conqueror on the limbs of his victim, and to complete the benefits which during a period of ninety years have been conceded, sometimes by fits and starts, sometimes by well-considered policy; if he should undertake the heroic task of riveting the Union of the three kingdoms by affection, even more than by statute; if he should endeavour to efface the stains which proscription and prejudice have affixed on the fair fame of Great Britain—then, indeed, though he may not reunite his party, and though he may not soon return to power, he will be enrolled among the noblest of England's statesmen, and will have laid the foundations of a great work which either he or a younger generation will not fail to accomplish.'

Such, as a looker-on, would have been my judgment. The Liberal party has been re-united more suddenly, and the country has responded to the call of its leaders more rapidly, than I expected; but I still retain my opinion that Mr. Gladstone, encounter-

ing great risks, and provoking bitter animosity, has aimed, not at official station, but at the welfare of his country, in the mighty struggle in which he has engaged.

Another obstacle which has been interposed to a fair consideration of the Irish question is the pretended obligation of the Coronation Oath; I say pretended obligation, because the real origin of that oath and the duty it imposes form a very clear and intelligible history. James II. violated the laws, and forfeited his right to the throne, by the most flagrant offences against his people. In despite of existing statutes, he conferred upon Roman Catholics offices in the Army, in the Church, and in the State, from which they were debarred by the most solemn Acts of Parliament. He made a Roman Catholic head of a college at Oxford; he gave a bishopric to a clergyman justly suspected of being a Roman Catholic, and he placed Roman Catholics in the command of regiments in order to secure by the sword a sanction for his shameless violation of the fundamental laws of the realm. It was in order to provide against the repetition of these crimes that Parliament sought to bind the head of the executive power for the future, while they left the legislative power quite unfettered. This point is well stated by Lord Kenyon, in reply to George III., who consulted him on the Coronation Oath. Lord Kenyon declared that—

> Provided sound policy, and a sense of the duty they owed to the established religion of the country, did not operate on their minds, there was no statute law to pre-

vent either of the Houses of Parliament from abolishing the whole government and discipline of the Church of England as by law established; no danger being apprehended from those quarters at the time of the Revolution. But that was not the case as regarded the King. Recent misconduct in the reign of James II. occasioned the Coronation Oath to exact from the King that he would maintain the Protestant reformed religion established by law.*

While Lord Kenyon thus pointed out the purpose for which the Coronation Oath was designed, he left it to the King's own conscience to decide upon the course he should pursue, and, unhappily, that conscience was not enlightened either by large views of public policy or by an accurate knowledge of the history of this country. His honesty was unquestionable, his attachment to the Protestant religion beyond all suspicion, but his education had been neglected, and his prejudices were invincible.

Lord Macaulay has referred in his history to a debate which took place in the House of Commons in 1689 upon the subject of the Coronation Oath, and although he has not fully reported it, yet his general representation, that all the leaders of that day intended to bind the executive and not the legislative power of the King, is perfectly true. Mr. Garraway moved to add to the oath as proposed—'That the King in the oath swear to maintain the Protestant religion as it is or shall be established by law.' This amendment was supported by Mr. Somers. He said:—

Though the constitution be as good as possible for the

* See *Life of Lord Sidmouth*, by Dean Pellew, vol. i. p. 283.

present time, none can be good at all times; therefore I am for the word 'may,' and that will be a remedy at all times.

Mr. Somers probably meant to favour comprehension, but Mr. Finch, on the other hand, who had no such view, thought that the oath, as it stood, bore the interpretation which Mr. Garraway sought to express. He said of the amendment, 'It is needless, because the words being implied, you need not add them.' Such appears to have been the sense of the majority.

The oath without the amendment was confirmed by 188 votes to 149. Lord Macaulay has well said:—

Every person who has read these debates must be fully convinced that the statesmen who framed the Coronation Oath did not mean to bind the King in his legislative capacity. Unhappily, more than a hundred years later, a scruple, which those statesmen thought too absurd to be seriously entertained by any human being, found its way into a mind, honest, indeed, and religious, but narrow and obstinate by nature, and at once debilitated and excited by disease. Seldom, indeed, have the ambition and perfidy of tyrants produced evils greater than those which were brought on our country by that fatal conscientiousness. A conjuncture, singularly auspicious—a conjuncture at which wisdom and justice might perhaps have reconciled races long hostile, and might have made the British islands one truly United Kingdom — was suffered to pass away. The opportunity, once lost, returned no more. Two generations of public men have since laboured with imperfect success to repair the error which was then committed; nor is it improbable that some of the penalties of that error may continue to afflict a remote posterity.*

* Macaulay's *History of England*, vol. iii. p. 117. 8vo.

It is obvious indeed that, if the opinion of George III. had prevailed, it would have stopped the progress of religious liberty. It was the opinion of that sovereign that no Protestant dissenter could hold office, and no Roman Catholic could enter Parliament without a violation of the Coronation Oath. According to this view, George IV. could not have consented to the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts in 1828, or to the admission of Roman Catholics to Parliament in 1829. Nor could William IV. have consented to the suppression of ten bishoprics in Ireland; neither could her present Majesty have consented to the repeal of that security for the Protestant religion by which, according to the insulting phrase of Lord Derby, Roman Catholic members of Parliament were 'muzzled' in respect to their votes upon the Irish Church.

I know indeed that there are some men so obstinately conservative that they conscientiously believe all extensions of religious liberty or alterations of church establishments to be forbidden by the Coronation Oath; but the same persons would have been zealous opponents of all the changes introduced by the Reformation, and would have been martyrs on behalf of the sacred supremacy of the Pope. They would at an earlier date have opposed the introduction of Christianity, and would have cried with Demetrius, the silversmith, and those of his craft, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' At a still earlier time they would have been shocked at the overthrow of the Druids, and would have called out sacrilege

and spoliation against the invasion of the sacred groves as furiously as they now exclaim against the robbery of the Church of Ireland.

There is no hope of convincing such men; like the enemies of the Reformation, like the persecutors of Christianity, and like the priests of the Druids, they must be overborne by the onward march of civilisation, and crushed under the wheels of the car of progress.

We may now conclude with Lord Melville, and what George III. called his 'Scotch Metaphysics,' that the Coronation Oath restrains the Queen in her executive and not in her legislative capacity. It is a solemn obligation, binding on the conscience of the sovereign, to prevent her from doing that which is forbidden by the laws.

There are still some preliminary remarks to which I must call attention.

I consider that the good sense of the nation has disposed of the fallacy which was offered for the acceptance of the two Houses of Parliament, that there is no distinction between public and private property. The electors of the United Kingdom have seen very clearly that a property which is set apart by the State for a public purpose differs altogether from a property which belongs to an individual as his own private freehold. Such public property is held on other conditions, subject to other laws, and destined to other dispositions, than those which regulate private property. I may, therefore, assume—

That, saving life-interests and private advowsons,

the property of the Irish branch of the Established Church is as much subject to the control of Parliament as the Irish Church property was when it was taken away from the Roman Catholics, after three hundred years' possession, and as the property of the Scotch Episcopal Established Church was when it was taken away from the Episcopal clergy of Scotland, in contravention of the existing laws.

I have next to remark, that there are many worthy persons in Great Britain who are very willing to do complete justice to Ireland, but who cannot bear the notion of doing any good to Roman Catholics. But, as Ireland is chiefly inhabited by Roman Catholics, the accomplishment of this wish is not possible. I, therefore, take for granted—

That, if justice and sound policy require certain appropriations, the argument that we shall thereby do good to Roman Catholics is not to be held as an insuperable bar to such appropriation.*

If this be granted, I ask, further—

That, if solemn promises made to Ireland more than sixty years ago ; if the strict claims of justice to several millions of Her Majesty's subjects living in the United Kingdom, and if the views of en-

* Mr. Bence Jones says very pertinently, 'There is a preliminary point on which it is necessary men's minds should be made up before the main question is reached. Is the question to be settled for the good of Ireland and the contentment of her people, or to please English voluntaries and for their contentment? It may seem a matter of course to say that the question is to be settled for the good of Ireland and the contentment of her people ; but it is not so in fact.'

lightened policy all require certain measures to be adopted, those measures shall not be summarily and harshly rejected because contingent dangers and hypothetical evils may be predicted as likely to arise in England and in Scotland from the fulfilment of those solemn promises, a compliance with those demands of justice and the adoption of that enlightened policy.

There is a fourth remark, which is of itself almost a matter of fact, but which carries with it considerations of the utmost importance. It is as follows :—

The members returned to the present Parliament for the counties and boroughs of Ireland are 105, of whom it may be said roughly that sixty-five are Liberals and forty Conservatives. If, therefore, a Parliament were assembled in Ireland as before the Union, consisting of three hundred members for the House of Commons, it may be presumed that there would be in that Parliament a majority of seventy, if not more, in favour of the disestablishment and disendowment of the Protestant Established Church.

This reasonable presumption leads to a reflection which appears to me decisive. Mr. Disraeli said many years ago that an English minister ought to adopt such a course of policy towards Ireland as would be adopted if a revolution had taken place in that country. But, short of a revolution, we may see that, if after the passing of the Catholic Relief Act, the Act of Union had been repealed, a great majority

in the House of Commons of Ireland would be declaring at this time in favour of those principles of disestablishment and disendowment which Mr. Gladstone has proclaimed.

If, therefore, by some unforeseen change of opinion in the House of Commons among the English members, or from any obstruction offered by the House of Lords, the wishes of Ireland should be defeated, it will be plain that for no purposes of peace and order, with no view of maintaining tranquillity, but solely from a regard to English prejudices and fears for the permanence of the English Church, a tyrannical sway has been established in Ireland. It will be the iron hand, without the velvet glove—a proclamation to the whole world that the authority of England over Ireland is maintained solely by force, and has no root in the affections and loyalty of the Irish people.

Perhaps I ought to make it a further condition that I should be allowed to be tedious; and, in that case, I would promise, like Dogberry, that I would bestow all my tediousness upon your worship. Nor will I deny that a process of ascertaining facts and weighing the considerations arising from the customs of a country and the character of its people is not very compatible with either brevity or liveliness.

In order to consider the case of the Irish Church, we must go back to the days of Elizabeth. I will give some extracts from Hallam, from Bishop Heber, and from Southey, in order to show what those not unfriendly authors have said of the Reformation in Ireland. Let us first consult Hallam:—

There were doubtless many arguments in favour of this compulsory establishment of the Protestant Church, which must have appeared so conclusive to Elizabeth and her council that no one in that age could have disputed them without incurring, among other hazards, that of being supposed a lover of unreasonable paradoxes. The first was that, the Protestant religion being true, it was the Queen's duty to take care that her subjects should follow no other. The second, that, being an absolute monarch, or something like it, and a very wise princess, she had a better right to order what doctrine they should believe than they could have to choose for themselves. The third, that Ireland, being as a handmaid, and a conquered country, must wait in all important matters on the pleasure of the greater island, and be accommodated to its revolutions. And as it was natural that the Queen and her advisers should not reject maxims which all the rest of the world entertained, merely because they were advantageous to themselves, we need not, perhaps, be very acrimonious in censuring the laws whereon the Church of Ireland is founded. *But it is still equally true that they involved a principle essentially unjust, and that they have enormously aggravated, both in the age of Elizabeth and long afterwards, the calamities and disaffection of Ireland.*

Let us next hear the good and pious Bishop Heber:—

No part, indeed, of the administration of Ireland by the English Crown has been more extraordinary and more unfortunate than the system pursued for the introduction of the reformed religion. Instead of sending, in the first instance, missionaries well skilled in their native tongue to convince the inhabitants of the errors of their ancient faith, and to conciliate them to the new, the churches were filled with English preachers, whose nation made them unpopular, and whose ignorance of the language which only their

parishioners could speak or understand with readiness prevented all extensive benefit from their zeal, however warm, and their abilities, however considerable. It was not even thought necessary to furnish them with a translation either of the Liturgy or of the Scriptures, though, by a refinement in absurdity, they were compelled by a fine (which, indeed, was rarely enforced) to attendance on a Church service which was still more unintelligible to them than their ancient mass-book, without having the same associations to recommend it to them. Accordingly, while Wales, from an opposite line of treatment, received the doctrines of the Reformation with avidity, and at an early period was become almost exclusively Protestant; while the Norman isles have ever since been among the most faithful adherents of the Episcopal Church, from the advantage of French preachers and a French service-book, Ireland, with a people above most others docile and susceptible of new impressions, has remained, through a great majority of her population, in the possession of a creed discountenanced by the State, and under the dominion of prejudices which even to the present moment no effective measures have been taken to remove.*

Mr. Southey, in his 'Life of Wesley,' speaks in the following terms:—

Ireland is the only country in which the Reformation produced nothing but evil. Protestant Europe has been richly repaid for the long calamities of that great revolution, by the permanent blessings which it left behind; and even among those nations where the papal superstition maintained its dominion by fire and sword, an important

* *Life of Jeremy Taylor, D.D., Lord Bishop of Down, Connor, and Dromore.* By the Right Rev. Reginald Heber, late Bishop of Calcutta. Prefixed to an edition of *Jeremy Taylor's Works*. London, 1854, p. cxv.

change was effected in the lives and conduct of the Romish clergy. Ireland alone was so circumstanced as to be incapable of deriving any advantage, while it was exposed to all the evils of the change.

The work of sacrilege and plunder went on there as it did in England and Scotland; but the language of the people, and their savage state, precluded all possibility of their religious improvement.*

It appears from these extracts that, whatever might be the causes of the failure, the Reformation, which was so great a blessing to England, never prospered in Ireland.

I pass over the faithlessness of Charles I., the ferocity of Cromwell, and the bigotry of James II. William III. consulted, truly and wisely, the welfare of England and of Scotland. The welfare of Ireland he could never fairly consult. He was obliged to maintain in arms his title to the crown. The minority of the people of Ireland defended that title; the majority combined with James II. and the King of France to deprive England of her independence. At that time Louis XIV. fitted up a ship of war, gorgeously and luxuriously, to convey his pensioned vassal, James II., with the French ambassador, and French troops, to Ireland. William flew to assert the right of the people of England to choose their own king, while his consort, Queen Mary, sitting in council at Whitehall, baffled an internal conspiracy, consented that her uncle should be sent to the Tower, and ordered her admiral to

* Southey's *Life of Wesley*, vol. ii. p. 258.

attack the French fleet, off the coast of the Isle of Wight.*

This was, indeed, a time of crisis; it was no fanciful question of the balance of power which forced England into that war. It was a question of our freedom, of our independence, of our national existence.

It is therefore a matter of regret, but not of reproach, that William III. should at that time have consented to harsh laws against the Roman Catholics of Ireland. He might justly have pleaded, as Lord Carteret did when he ruled as Viceroy in the following century—

> *Res dura et regni novitas me talia cogunt*
> *Moliri.*

It is for us to repair in calmness and in peace what was then done by violence and in war.

I now pass over a long period of penalty and persecution, from the days of William III. to the period of the American war. It was in 1778 that, pressed by the dangers of civil war, and in prospect of troubles in Ireland, Parliament at length allowed the Roman Catholics to worship God according to the rites of the church in which they believed. The works of Mr. Burke show how grudgingly, and how incompletely, these concessions were made, how much bitterness was mixed with the fountain of grace, how much of what was due to justice was withheld by pride. So again, at the commencement of the French war, the elective franchise, which was refused with arrogance

* Macaulay's *History of England*, vol. iii. pp. 604–5.

when the danger was distant, was conceded humbly when that danger was near. To use the words of Burke on another occasion, the Government crept meanly out of difficulties into which they had strutted proudly. But the cup of concession was far from full. Catholics could vote for representatives, but they could not themselves be representatives of the people. They could shed their blood for their sovereign in the field, but they were forbidden to enjoy the honours of the military profession.

The tyranny and oppression of the Orange faction, the failure of Lord Fitzwilliam's pacific mission, and the contagion of French principles, produced the rash and unhappy rebellion of 1798. Mr. Pitt, struck by these occurrences, affected also by disgust at the tyrant monopoly which Mr. Burke has so eloquently painted, devised a new policy for Ireland. He conceived that the equality which could not be granted without danger—so long as Ireland had a separate government, with a separate Parliament—nor refused without injustice, might be safely conceded if the two Legislatures were united, and the supreme authority were vested in the Imperial sceptre. This was a plan worthy of a great statesman.

Mr. Pitt was at this time the most powerful minister who had held office since the Revolution of 1688. He had apparently the entire confidence of his sovereign, his policy was approved by immense majorities in both Houses of Parliament; his words had, therefore, the effect of formal compacts, binding both on England and on Ireland. He spoke in Parliament

not only to the Commons of England but to the millions of Roman Catholics who formed the great majority of the people of Ireland. What, then, did he propose to the two countries? I have given in a former letter, but I must again repeat here, the words of Mr. Pitt, which in fact amount to a solemn promise on the part of England, and indicate the spirit of that Act of Union to the letter of which alone the opponents of justice to Ireland adhere with so much pertinacity:—

> Does an union, under such circumstances, *by free consent, and on just and equal terms,* deserve to be treated as a proposal for subjecting Ireland to a foreign yoke? Is it not, rather, *the free and voluntary association of two great countries* which join for their common benefit in one empire where each will retain its proportional weight and importance under the security of *equal laws, reciprocal affection,* and *inseparable interests,* and which want nothing but that indissoluble connection to render both invincible?

Thus we see that with emphatic iteration Mr. Pitt lays stress upon the words '*free consent*,' '*free and voluntary association*,' '*just and equal terms*,' '*equal laws*,' '*reciprocal affection*,' '*inseparable interests*.' In such terms, in Virgilian verse and in stately prose, Mr. Pitt proclaimed equality as the main condition of the union with Ireland. I ask what was done to carry into effect the '*just and equal terms*' which were to be the efficient causes of that '*reciprocal affection*'? What has been done either by Mr. Pitt or his pretended disciples? Mr. Pitt, indeed—alluding to a measure by which Roman Catholics would

have been admitted to Parliament and to political office, but which the King would not allow him to propose—said:—

> I mean this, that a measure of that sort appeared to me to be of much importance, under all the circumstances; and, being unable to bring it forward as a measure of government, I thought I could not therefore, in honour, remain in the situation in which I stood; and that I was desirous of letting it also be understood that, whenever the *objection I alluded to did not exist, the same obstacle did not interpose,* everything depending on me, as well as those who thought with me, I should do, for I was desirous of carrying that measure, thinking it of great importance to the empire at large.*

Mr. Pitt meant, no doubt, that, when the King should overcome his scruples, or when, by death or incapacity of mind or body, George III. should cease to govern, he and those who thought with him would do everything depending on them to give equal laws to Ireland.

Alas! Mr. Pitt himself submitted to the obstacles interposed to the performance of his own promises.

For in 1804, the war having been renewed, and the abilities of the existing ministry being evidently inadequate to such a crisis, Mr. Pitt, by motions in the House of Commons, forced Mr. Addington to resign, and the post of First Minister of the Crown was again offered to him. Seeing the dangers of the war, and the fear we might well entertain that the King's mind would be driven to madness by insisting on the

* *Pitt's Speeches*, March 25, 1801.

Roman Catholic claims, Mr. Pitt might perhaps be excused for placing in abeyance the opinions he had submitted to the King in 1801.

But there was another question which admitted neither of delay nor compromise. To meet the power of an enlarged France, directed by immense talents, required a combination of all the best abilities of the country. On this point all men were agreed. The fears of Jacobinical influence from France had ceased with the rise of despotic power in the person of Napoleon. There was, therefore, for Mr. Pitt a facility of union with Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey, as well as with his former colleagues. Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning were also favourable to the Roman Catholic claims; Mr. Canning was a friend, and Lord Castlereagh a political follower, of Mr. Pitt.

In these circumstances Mr. Pitt formed a plan of the ministry he was prepared to recommend to the King. Lord Stanhope has given us a sketch of this plan in a facsimile from Mr. Pitt's own hand-writing. In this list, Mr. Fox, Lord Fitzwilliam, and Lord Melville appear as Secretaries of State, Lord Spencer as First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Grenville as President of the Council, Lord Castlereagh as President of the Board of Control, Lord Harrowby as President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Grey as Secretary at War, and Mr. Canning as Secretary to Ireland. It is obvious that, if such a ministry had been formed, even the deaths of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, in 1806, would not have prevented the concession of the Roman Catholic claims in 1811. The Duke of Port-

land would have had little weight in such a ministry, and Lord Eldon would probably have pursued the course taken by Lord Lyndhurst in 1829. But it was fated not to be. Mr. Pitt yielded to the King both as to men and measures. He had neither the men he wished in his ministry nor the power of proposing the measures he thought necessary for the public welfare.

In the autumn of 1805, Pitt went to Weymouth to urge the King to allow him to strengthen his ministry by inviting aid from the parties of Fox and Grenville. But to no purpose! On the 8th of January 1806, a fortnight before his death, he said emphatically to Lord Melville, 'I wish the King may not live to repent, and sooner than he thinks, the rejection of the advice which I pressed on him at Weymouth.'*

In 1807 the leader in the House of Commons was Mr. Percival, an accomplished lawyer, a ready and able speaker, but an intolerant bigot. He declared, after the dissolution of 1807, that he would oppose the repeal of the Test Act as dangerous to the Protestant Church; and he remarked, with triumph, that the cry that had been raised (the cry of 'No Popery!') had spread like wildfire over the kingdom. Lord Howick, on the other hand, earnestly pressed his Majesty's ministers to attend to the advice of the late Attorney-General for Ireland (Mr. Plunkett), and to make Ireland the first and last object of their thoughts.

* *Life of Pitt*, vol. iv. p. 369.

The advice which was given by Mr. Plunkett in 1807 was repeated to the Ministers of the Crown by Mr. Gladstone in 1868. The history of the sixty years of interval, so far as regards Ireland, may be briefly related.

After the assassination of Mr. Percival, Lord Liverpool established a see-saw, by which half his colleagues were allowed to speak for the Roman Catholic claims, while he, the head of the Ministry, and the rest of the Cabinet, opposed them. The Whig party constantly voted in their favour. Some Irishmen have complained that Ireland has been made the shuttlecock of party; but they had much more reason to complain when the shuttlecock was tossed to and fro between contending members of the same Government.

In 1825 an attempt was made by independent members to obtain from Parliament a provision for the Roman Catholic clergy, but it was frowned upon by Lord Liverpool, and had to be abandoned. In 1827, Lord Liverpool being disabled by illness, Mr. Canning declared that he would not be debarred from asserting his just claims to be Prime Minister on the ground that he was in favour of the Roman Catholics, and that he would be no party to his own helotism. The anti-Catholics of the Cabinet retired from office.

In 1829 the Duke of Wellington, appalled by the prospect of civil war, capitulated unconditionally. But the settlement of the Church question, without which Mr. Peel had declared in 1816 that the great

mass of the people of Ireland would not be satisfied, was left unnoticed and neglected.

In 1835 I attempted, by what was called the Appropriation Clause, to settle the Church question; but, as you have stated in your election address—

> It was evident that the Liberal party, in adopting the policy of the so-called Appropriation Clause, which did not touch the root of the matter, had outrun the public opinion of Great Britain.

Yet I by no means regret the course which I then took. As soon as the Reform Bill of 1832 became law, my mind turned to the great question of Ireland. It was much to break the sod, and put the plough into the ground. It is true of these peaceful contests, as Lord Byron has said of more mortal combats, that—

> Freedom's battle once begun,
> * * * * * *
> Though baffled oft, is ever won.

We now arrive at the main question, What is to be done in 1869?

By the report of the Commissioners on the revenues and condition of the Established Church in Ireland, it appears that a certain revenue is appropriated to the Church Establishment. But what Establishment? Quoting again from the report of the Commission, it appears that the number of persons returned by the census of 1861 as belonging to the communion of the Established Church was 693,357.

The number of Protestants belonging to other communions in Ireland is upwards of half a million. The number of Roman Catholic subjects of her Majesty in Ireland is about four millions and a half. What notice is taken of these five millions of persons in the report of the Church Commission? None whatever. How much of the revenues secured by the State to the bishops and clergy of Ireland do they receive? Where are the 'equal terms and equal laws' promised by Mr. Pitt? Twenty-eight years after the Union, we fulfilled, in fear of rebellion, Mr. Pitt's promise of civil and political equality. Sixty-seven years after the Union, we have done nothing to fulfil his promise of 'equal laws,' so far as regards ecclesiastical equality. Yet in the year 1868, when Mr. Gladstone reminded the nation of its unfulfilled engagements, and declared, with reason, that not less than twenty shillings in the pound can discharge our debt, people cry out, in pretended amazement, 'Why so hasty? What makes you in such a hurry? Only sixty-seven years have elapsed since these promises were made, and you already call upon us to fulfil them! Surely, you can wait fifty or sixty years longer. If, indeed, we were engaged in war, or insurrection were at hand; if a foreign army threatened our coasts — then, indeed, we might be ready to grant all that the Irish ask, and even to allow the Protestant Episcopal clergy to be driven out with as little mercy as was shown to those of Scotland when they were *rabbled* in 1689. But do not be in a hurry. The army and the constabulary

of Ireland are still able to keep the peace, and we may go on as we are for some years longer.'

This will not do.

The time has arrived for equal justice to Ireland, as in 1831 it had arrived for Parliamentary Reform.

In considering the modes by which equality can be obtained, we need not tarry on the course adopted in Scotland, of abolishing the English Episcopal Establishment, and placing the religion of the majority of the Irish people in its place. Neither the priests nor the people of Ireland look to this solution; neither the Established Church nor the dissenters of England, neither the Established Church nor the seceders of Scotland, would support it; neither Whigs nor Tories would vote for it. There remain, then, three plans to be considered.

The first is that sketched by Mr. Pitt, and intended by him to have been carried into effect, namely, preserve the Protestant Established Church, with all its privileges and emoluments, and place by the side of it an endowed Roman Catholic clergy, united to the State by golden links.

The second is that proposed by the present Lord Grey, to divide the revenues of the Protestant Established Church among the Episcopalian Protestants, the Presbyterians, and the Roman Catholics.

The third is known at present by the terms 'disestablishment' and 'disendowment.' It is clear that by any one of these three modes equality might be obtained.

Had the plan of Mr. Pitt been adopted in 1801, it would in all probability have been successful. The Roman Catholic bishops and clergy were ready at that time to accept an endowment from the State as the condition of the admission of their lay fellow-subjects to Parliament and to office. Forming the great majority of the people of Ireland, they would, in fact, have been in a position equal, if not superior, to that of the Established Church. But the prejudices which so long withheld the grant of justice to the laymen of the Roman Catholic Church, and the unwillingness of that Church to become the stipendiary of a Protestant Crown, have combined to place an unsurmountable bar in the way.

The plan of dividing the revenues of the Established Church between the Episcopal and Presbyterian Protestants and the Roman Catholics, in proportion to their numbers, is equally impracticable.

We arrive, therefore, at the proposals which have been known in Parliament and during the elections by the names of 'disestablishment' and 'disendowment.' What is 'disestablishment'? What is 'disendowment'? I will give my own interpretation of these clumsy words, leaving it to others to attach to them, if they think fit, a different signification.

I understand, therefore, by 'disestablishment,' that the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland is to be no longer connected with the State. I understand that its bishops and beneficed clergy are no longer to be named by the Crown, and will have no more connection with the State than the Protestant Episcopal Church in

Scotland, or the Roman Catholic Church in England. I understand, in short, that the Protestant Established Church is to be hereafter the Free Episcopal Church of Ireland. Do I fear anything for Protestantism when the Church is separated from the State? Quite the contrary.

In the middle of the last century three tender saplings were brought to the Duke of Athole's gardener at Dunkeld. They were placed in the greenhouse, and guarded with the greatest care from the rough storms of winter, and the parching droughts of summer. Suddenly some one advised, 'These plants are larches; they will grow better out of doors.' The saplings were planted out, and from little feathery bushes they grew to be magnificent trees. So it will be, I expect, with the Protestant Church of Ireland. No longer dandled and nurtured in the greenhouse of the State, it will be the stronger for the breezes it encounters, and the brighter for the blaze of light in which it will expand.

In regard to disendowment, I cannot be equally precise or equally sanguine. I understand, indeed, by that term that the bishops and clergy are, generally speaking, no longer to have yearly incomes assigned and secured to them by law; but I do not understand that the Free Protestant Church of Ireland may not receive assistance from the State just as, without being endowed, the Roman Catholic Church has received a yearly grant for the College of Maynooth, and as the Presbyterian Church has received the Regium donum.

There seems to have been some confusion in the Resolutions of the late House of Commons upon this subject. It does not follow, logically or equitably, that, because the Protestant Church of Ireland is disestablished, there should be no grants for Maynooth, or for the Presbyterian Regium donum. It may be wise—and I believe it will be wise—to reconsider those grants, and to place the whole fund appropriated by law to the present Established Church, or granted by Parliament to the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian Churches, on a new, a more just, and a more secure foundation.

But, in doing this, we must regard both the state of Ireland and the general principles of government.

According to my view, the promotion of religion and morality is not, as Lord Macaulay thinks, a secondary, but a primary object of a civilised State. It was a primary object of the Romans, who drew from their religion the obligations of morality and good faith. Their great orator, who borrowed his philosophy from the Greeks, has said in his 'Treatise on Laws':—

*Sit igitur jam hoc a principio persuasum civibus, dominos esse omnium rerum ac moderatores deos; eaque quæ gerantur, eorum geri ditione ac numine; eosdemque optimè de genere hominum mereri.**

Such, according to Polybius, was the general sentiment of the Romans. Such, also, was the sentiment of Plato, and of the great men of the Athenian Commonwealth.

* *De Legibus*, ii. 7, quoted by Burke in his *Reflections on the French Revolution.*

We, who live in modern times, have not to deplore the ignorance which God winked at; we have the full light of Christianity beaming upon us. When I speak of Christianity, I mean not the Church of Rome, or the Church of Luther, or the Church of Calvin, or the Church of Cranmer, but the Church of Christ.

It was said by Dr. Magee, Archbishop of Dublin, with more of epigram than of truth, that there existed in Ireland two communions, the one body having a church without what we can properly call a religion, and the other a religion without what we can properly call a church. I think, with all deference to the learned archbishop, that Roman Catholics and Presbyterians in Ireland have both what we can properly call a religion and what we can properly call a church. I demur, indeed, to the assertion of the Roman Catholic catechism that there is any living person who can speak in the name and with the authority of the Divinity. I demur also to the acute reasonings of the Presbyterian catechism of the Church of Scotland. But, notwithstanding these objections, I am ready to say, with Wesley:—

> What then is religion? It is happiness in God, or in the knowledge and love of God. It is faith working by love, producing righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost. In other words, it is a heart and life devoted to God; or in communion with God the Father and the Son; or the mind which was in Christ Jesus, enabling us to walk as He walked.*

* *Life of Wesley*, vol. ii. p. 545.

Roman Catholic doctrines may appeal more powerfully to the imagination; Protestant doctrines may appeal more powerfully to the understanding; but they all appeal to the heart. One form may commend itself more to the Irishman, the Italian, and the Spaniard; the other to the Briton, the Dane, and the Swede; but these are all Christians.

Let us not be mistaken with regard to this matter. When the Roman Catholic Christian bends in devout worship at the elevation of the Host in St. Peter's, amid the strains of sacred music, the pouring forth of incense on the fragrant air, and the voices and the gestures, and the rich vestments of priests consecrated to the service of the Most High, he tenders the homage which he believes the most suitable from the humble creature to the Almighty Creator, Preserver, and Saviour of mankind. But so also the persecuted Presbyterian, when he traversed the barren moor, and crossed the flooded river; when he sought in the waste and the solitary places a mountain side where, with no other roof than the inclement sky, and no other floor than the damp heath, he might pour forth with his fellows in faith the sublime Psalm which taught that, among the swords of a slaughtering host, and away from the dungeons of a tyrant, there was still a refuge for them who besought Almighty God for his pardon and his blessing; he was a true sincere Christian, and felt assured of acceptance by the Lord, the Maker of the World, the Sovereign of the Universe.

There is—there is—one primitive and sure
Religion pure,
Unchang'd in Spirit, though its forms and codes
Wear myriad modes,
Contains all creeds within its mighty span,
The love of God, displayed in love of Man.

What is now in peril is not the Established Church of Ireland or the Established Church of England; it is Christianity itself. What is to be feared is not the increased influence of the Church of Rome, or the progress of the Protestant Liberation Society, but the progress of sceptical opinions, denounced equally by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Orleans and the Presbyterian Dr. Macleod—opinions which would deprive religion of its authority in making good men and good subjects.

Impressed with these sentiments, I approach the subject of the disendowment of the Church of Ireland. Let us endeavour to consider calmly the claims on the State of the supposed disestablished Episcopalian Protestants, and of the unestablished Presbyterians and Roman Catholics of Ireland.

The Protestant Established Church of Ireland has in its favour the prescription of three centuries. I remember hearing Sir James Macintosh say, 'Modern writers cry up utility and decry prescription, but they forget that prescription is a part of utility.' In my opinion he was quite right. Not that the claims of prescription are to be pushed to an extravagant length. No one would venture to say that because a piece of land has been bequeathed, the rents of which were

to be devoted to a hospital for the cure of men who had gone as pilgrims to the Holy Land, and had come back lepers, all the rents of that piece of land should for ever be accumulated for the cure of pilgrims afflicted with leprosy; or that because a sum of money had been vested two centuries ago as a fund for the redemption of Christian captives in Algiers, with six trustees paid 1,000*l.* a year each for managing the fund, the six trustees should for ever receive that sum when there are no captives in Algiers.

But when a great establishment like the Church of Ireland is to be disendowed, there are many considerations which enforce care, forbearance, and tenderness. Sir Roundell Palmer has justly observed that the change to be effected has no resemblance to the disruption which took place not many years ago in the Church of Scotland. Neither has it any resemblance to the conflict which took place in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, when the Puritan sects contended that the Reformed Church of Elizabeth had not gone far enough in its separation from Rome. In those cases an ardent enthusiasm inspired the disendowed clergy, and supported them in a conscientious sacrifice of worldly advantages to deep religious convictions. In the disendowment of the Church of Ireland we have nothing of the kind. The clergy are willing to remain in the performance of all the duties which the State has hitherto required of them, and cannot appeal with effect to any enthusiasm among men of their persuasion to induce them to

take from their own pockets the incomes which have hitherto been derived from the pockets of others.

There is another consideration which stands in the way of total and immediate disendowment. During 300 years many private donations have been made to the Protestant Church because it was a Protestant Church. An archbishop of Armagh has given money which had become his own property, and which he might have left to his sons or nephews, for the purpose of repairing and adorning his cathedral of Armagh. A lady who had inherited some property gives 600*l.* to clear off the debts of her parish church. In numerous cases, from the splendid cathedral of St. Patrick to the humble churches and glebe-houses of the rural clergy, the donations of Protestants have taught the spire to rise and have made the parsonage the comfortable residence of a charitable and deserving clergyman.

We have no more right to take away these edifices when built wholly by the voluntary donations of Protestants, than we have to take away from the Roman Catholics their new cathedrals of Limerick or Killarney.

I observe that the defenders of the Irish Church, on the hustings, have all in chorus disclaimed any intention to defend its anomalies and abuses; yet these anomalies and abuses are in reality among the most useful parts of the Establishment. The Archbishop

* See Godkin's *Ireland and her Churches*, for many instances of Protestant liberality. See also Mr. Bence Jones's pamphlet.

of Armagh, in consecrating a church at Belfast, very lately remarked that this church was one of five to be built by voluntary contributions, and that he had no doubt, not only that the whole five would be built, but that other churches would owe their origin to the same voluntary zeal. He had not, however, the same confidence with regard to churches in remote rural districts. He is probably quite right, both in his confidence and in his distrust.

Being in a parish in the north of Ireland which was said to contain 16,000 inhabitants, I asked the numbers of each communion, and, if I recollect right, was told that there were 4,000 members of the Established Church, 4,000 Presbyterians, and 8,000 Roman Catholics. Now there appears no difficulty in enacting that the 4,000 churchmen, who are probably the richest community of the three, should provide for their own spiritual wants on an equal footing with the Presbyterians and Roman Catholics.

But if we go from this northern population to a southern parish, we may find a Protestant clergyman with a congregation of two, or ten, or twenty persons, surrounded by a Roman Catholic population of four or five thousand. The services of that minister in his church are of little value, but he is by no means an unuseful member of the community. He is probably an educated man, and practices all 'the sweet civilities of life.' He and his family visit the Roman Catholic poor, among whom there prevails none of that antipathy which springs up in parishes

where the rival communions are in numbers nearly on a par. He is ready to provide and pay for the medical attendance that may be required when all the members of a wretched family are struck down by sickness. He is not wanting in the exercise of the charities of a good Christian; nor, though he is forbidden to tread upon the disputed domain of theology, is he prohibited from telling the peasant that it is his duty to love God with all his heart and soul, and his neighbour as himself.

Such a clergyman, in a wild and desolate part of the country, where many of the habits of savage life are yet retained, is not without his use, and I would willingly see all the parishes of the city of Dublin subjected to the voluntary regimen before I would consent to see all of these remote churches fall to ruin, the glebe-house of the clergyman empty, his garden overgrown with weeds, and the charitable hand removed to some populous town, in order to comply with the report of Lord Derby's Commission, and do away with an anomaly.

These circumstances seem to me to require more consideration than the public mind has yet given to them. A convocation of the Irish clergy, or a numerous commission of the bishops, clergy, and laity of the Established Church in Ireland, ought to have ample time to examine and reflect on her future destiny as a voluntary church, and how she is to suit herself to her new position. I think that half a year at least ought to be allowed for the purpose of enabling such a body to frame and organise the Irish Free Church.

In England, numerous abbeys, monasteries, and priories, were abolished at the Reformation; but the Protestant owners of the great tithes have assumed the obligations, together with the possessions, and in many cases (I should hope in most cases) have provided better for the spiritual instruction of the parishes with which they became connected than the monastic houses had ever done.

In Ireland there are many laymen holders of impropriate tithes and zealous defenders of the Irish Church. These men, it appears to me, might well be asked to supply in great part the wants of the Protestant clergy in parishes connected with their property. A great landowner might build a roomy church near his own residence, where the Protestants for many miles round might resort on the Sundays, without regard to parochial divisions.

Mr. Bright has suggested, liberally and justly, that where the Episcopalian Protestants of a district are willing to provide for the income of a clergyman, the parish church and the glebe-house might be left to the Protestant Church. I should be disposed to go somewhat further; I think in such cases funds might be left in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for the purpose of keeping in repair the churches and the glebe-houses. In other cases the church and the glebe-house might be transferred by sale to the Presbyterian or Roman Catholic communion, and a sum obtained which would help to endow the Protestant clergyman of a neighbouring parish.

In this way the idea of the late Archbishop

Whately of a congregational church might be realised, and the conversion of the Established into a Voluntary Church might be made a painless operation.

The next body whose claims we have to consider are the Presbyterians of Ulster. They at present receive a grant of 40,000*l.* from the yearly vote of Parliament, earned by invaluable services, by ardent loyalty, and by a love of freedom accompanied, as the love of freedom often is, by a spirit of domination.

Let us look a little to their history. At the commencement of the reign of James I. the Gunpowder Plot in England was followed by a rebellion of the great chiefs in Ulster, who were not overcome without lamentable calamities. The province of Ulster was rendered desolate. Except some fields near the King's forts, and a few miserable cabins, the whole country was reduced to a state of barrenness. A large plan of colonisation was adopted, the London companies receiving grants of land in return for the monies they advanced and expended on the wasted province.

But the real colonists were the Scotch, who carried to the north of Ireland their hardy and rough habits of life, their deep religious faith, their steady valour, and their persevering industry. To them we owe it that Ulster, from a wild scene of desolation, became a prosperous manufacturing and agricultural province; to them we owe it that the Reformation was not extinguished among the Irish people; to them we owe it that the hero William found Irish hearts and Irish hands to assist him

in expelling from Ireland the pensioned menial of France, who had in vain endeavoured to reduce England to slavery. 'They are,' said Mr. Fox, 'men of the old leaven, but it was by that leaven that the British Constitution was kneaded.'

This gallant body have at various times had to suffer much from the ingratitude of the English Government. They were persecuted by Laud; they were oppressed by Strafford; the counsels of Archbishop Usher were neglected, as savouring too much of the milk of human kindness, and the spirit of Christian charity. They have received from the liberality of William III., and his successors of the house of Hanover, what Lord Mayo justly calls 'a miserable pittance.'

It seems to me that, if the Episcopal Church is to enjoy, according to the suggestion of Mr. Bright, the churches and glebes which it has hitherto possessed as an establishment, the Presbyterians of the North ought not to be neglected, and that in the shape of lands, or buildings, or money; they ought to derive some benefit from the disendowment of the Church, hitherto exclusively favoured. But, of course, their own wishes as to the application of the property or grants assigned to them must be consulted.

We now arrive at the most difficult part of the question, viz. whether any part of the funds to be derived from the disendowment of the Protestant Church can be applied to purposes approved by the Roman Catholic bishops and clergy. I am well

aware that the very fact of any particular application of the Church property commending itself to the minds of the Roman Catholic bishops and clergy would raise a prejudice against it in the minds of a great portion of the English and Scotch people. One noble lord—a successful candidate for an English county—openly declared that the Roman Catholics of Ireland were disloyal, and could never be reconciled to the English crown. To him, and to the many who have not spoken the same thing, but who think the same thing, I would say:—'We have tried injustice in regard to Irish ecclesiastical affairs very long, without much success; suppose we were to try justice. We have stirred up the north wind against the Irishman for a long while, and he has only folded his cloak more closely around him; suppose we were to try the effects of a few gleams of sunshine?'

I do not deny that the Catholic priesthood of Ireland, depending on their flocks and on voluntary contributions for their livelihood, are much affected in their political conduct by the popular voice. I remember, some years ago, an Irish Roman Catholic peer telling me that the parish priests in his neighbourhood were by no means favourable to the repeal of the Union, but that they could not withstand the influence of O'Connell, who wielded at will that fierce democracy.

If this influence be taken for granted, as well it may, the next question is, What is the present disposition of the Irish people? and upon this point I can call no better witness than Lord Mayo, late

Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. On March 10, 1868, on Mr. Maguire's motion, Lord Mayo gave his testimony in the following words :—

> I do not deny—in fact I do not know that anybody has attempted to deny—that a great amount of dissatisfaction, I might almost say of disloyalty to England and to English rule, exists . . . . . When you descend in the social scale, and come to the small occupiers of land, you find a considerable number of that class, who may be said to sympathise, to a certain degree, with the movement, though they have taken no active part in it. Descending still lower, to the uneducated agricultural labourers, to what in Ireland are called 'the farmers' boys,' to the mechanics and workmen, the shop assistants and small clerks in towns, you find this organisation widely spread. I am sorry to say that, in some of the cities in the south of Ireland, you find the mass of the people, of that class, deeply tainted with Fenianism, and perfectly ready to sympathise and co-operate with it to any extent.*

If such, then, be the disposition of a great portion of the Irish people, we cannot wonder that the priesthood dependent upon their good will show a great reluctance to be deemed the stipendiaries of the English Government, and to run the risk of losing their influence to the profit of their rivals—the Fenian conspirators.

But before we listen to the claims which strict justice would require of us on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church, I cannot forbear to touch on the religious question, which in fact lies at the bottom of

* Lord Mayo's speech, March 10, 1868, pp. 3, 6, 7.

much of the reluctance existing in England to make any further concessions to Roman Catholics. I remember on one occasion, when the question of admitting Roman Catholics to Parliament was discussed, Sir Robert Peel founded a great part of his speech in resistance to their claims on the objections which he felt to the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Now what is transubstantiation? Is it a mistaken interpretation of Scripture? Is it idolatry?

It appears to me, I confess, that however reformers may justify their separation from Rome on the true and unanswerable allegation that the opinions of the Romish Church are unscriptural, and their modes of worship superstitious, the allegation that any part of the Roman Catholic worship is idolatrous is an allegation engendered in the heat of the religious wars of the seventeenth century, is not founded upon any Roman Catholic doctrine, and tends to separate the various members of the Christian Church by bitter and unhallowed waters of hatred and contempt.

One of the great supposed scandals of the Roman Catholic Church consists in the abuse of the power of absolution by the priest. When Luther received the confession of some who had obtained absolution from Tetzel, the penitents informed him to his amazement and horror that they were not only absolved from their past sins, but were allowed to continue in the habitual practice of those sins without any bar to their ultimate salvation. It was this shocking perversion of the doctrine of Christ which induced Luther to

renounce the Pope, and declare open separation from the Church of Rome.* Yet nothing could be more opposed to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, as now professed, than the practice then sanctioned by a worldly Pope, who, in the indulgence of his pleasures and his cupidity, cared for none of these things.†

While we thus endeavour to relieve the Roman Catholic Church from the charge of idolatry, let us not forget our protest against that Church. She failed at the time of revival of letters, by not taking the lead herself in the great task of reform, and not spreading the knowledge of the Bible among all nations. She has left the work she should have undertaken to the Reformed Churches whom she condemns, and has given strength to superstitions among the benighted masses whose ignorance she so carefully cherishes.

Still, however gross the superstitions, and however dark the ignorance, of the masses, we must acknowledge the Roman Catholic faith to be the religion of a great majority among the various Christian communions in Ireland; and we must consider what claims they have upon the State in respect to that property which, from the time of Henry II., or from an earlier date, has been public property, devoted, in name at least, to the religious instruction of the nation.

* *Hist. de la Réformation du seizième Siècle*, par J. H. Merle d'Aubigné, vol. i.

† See, on the subject of the Holy Communion and Absolution, the Catechism approved by Cardinal Wiseman, Westminster, August 1859.

In the first place, we have to consider that this property, belonging to the Roman Catholic Church, was violently taken away from them by Queen Elizabeth, without any change in the faith of the people. I have no doubt that Elizabeth had a legal right to make this transfer; but I have as little doubt that the exercise of that right was a moral wrong.

It is said, indeed, that the tithe-rent charge is no burden upon the people of Ireland; but this is merely a perversion of fact, and an abuse of reasoning, in which the strong are apt to indulge towards the weak. The tithe-rent charge was originally tithe raised from the occupying tenant, with every kind of harshness and oppression. The landlord has now been made the collector, and receives a very handsome percentage for his trouble; but the nature of the property is unchanged, and were it devoted, as originally, to the payment of the Roman Catholic clergy, the tenants of Ireland who belong to that Church would no longer be subject to the heavy demands which are now made upon them for the maintenance of their own clergy.

I know very well that neither are the people of Great Britain willing to appropriate nor are the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland willing to accept the appropriation of these revenues to their original purpose. But the claim of the Roman Catholic people is not thereby cancelled. Sir John Davis has said that the people of Ireland love justice, even to their own hurt; but he has nowhere said that they love injustice to their own hurt. The appro-

priation of certain revenues of the Church to the present Protestant Church Establishment, on the ground of prescription, even to the moderate extent to which Mr. Bright would carry that appropriation, would be a flagrant wrong if the claims of the Roman Catholic inhabitants of Ireland were totally neglected. Let us see, then, in what manner we can appropriate a sum, either to Roman Catholic purposes or to the general benefit of the Irish people, to be distributed by Roman Catholic hands.

A question of this kind cannot be settled without consulting the heads of the Roman Catholic body in Ireland, both clerical and lay.

Two purposes, however, may be pointed out to those who will have to frame a measure on this subject.

The first of these is the erection of Roman Catholic chapels, and residences with glebes attached, for the parish priests of that persuasion. Looking back for a century, a great change is seen to have taken place in regard to places of worship used by the Irish Roman Catholic congregations.

In 1768, the saying of Mass being illegal, the most wretched barns and stables, and places hidden from the public view, were used by the Roman Catholics for the sacred functions of their religion. Later in the century, temporary wooden chapels were erected for divine service. Still more recently a further change has occurred, and stone chapels—decent, if not handsome—have been built

at the charge of the Roman Catholic farmers and peasantry. A Roman Catholic bishop told me that in one parish the occupiers of land had paid five shillings in the pound on the official valuation, for the purpose of erecting a chapel. It seems to me, then, that, considering the origin of the tithe-rent charge, a portion of it might well be applied to assist in the erection of chapels for the use of the great majority of the Irish people. In the same way, land might be purchased, and houses erected, to be assigned for ever as the residences of the parish priests of the people. I have made these suggestions in conformity with what I believe to be the sense of the late House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone's Resolutions scarcely touch the question of permanent disendowment. I agree with Sir George Lewis that arguments against establishment are not necessarily arguments against endowment; and I should like to see some lands preserved for the Protestant Episcopal clergy, and equal provision made for some portion of the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic clergy. The Presbyterian clergy have long wished for an increase of the Regium donum. The greatest Roman Catholic Irish authority, the late Bishop Doyle, was in favour of making a provision for the poorer ministers of his own communion.

Another part of the funds to be derived from disendowment might be applied to a more general purpose, should it appear to the Government and the

* See *Ireland and her Churches*, p. 550.

Legislature wise and benevolent to make such application.

A Poor Law has been introduced in Ireland; large sums—the amount of which is stated by Lord Mayo at 19,000,000*l.*—derived from local resources, have been expended for the relief of the poor; and none of those grave consequences which were predicted by Archbishop Whately, as sure to arise from the introduction of a Poor Law, have overwhelmed the property of Ireland. Yet there are two reflections which occur to me on the subject of workhouse relief, as enforced in England by the great reform of 1833, and in Ireland by the Poor Law since introduced. The enforcement of the workhouse test soon reduced the charge upon the people of England by an annual sum of two millions; and in Ireland the enforcement of that test has been a salutary and efficient check upon extravagance. But although it would be unwise, and even ruinous, to charge upon the rates large sums for out-door relief, the application of certain limited sums to two classes of paupers, in a mode different from that adopted under the Poor Law, might be at once benevolent and safe.

The application of the workhouse test to the able-bodied—the giving them relief on condition of something like imprisonment, accompanied by disagreeable work—is the only mode of driving indolence and vice to recur to industry and frugality as a source of subsistence. But there are two classes of persons who, it appears to me, might be admitted to

share in limited funds provided for their relief. One of these classes consists of the old and deserving poor, who have been overwhelmed by age and infirmity. Crabbe, the great Dutch painter among our poets, has given in the person of Isaac Ashford a striking description of a man of this class, with the thoughts which disturbed his latter years:—

* * * * * * * *

A noble peasant, Isaac Ashford, died.
Noble he was, contemning all things mean,
His truth unquestioned, and his soul serene;
Of no man's presence Isaac felt afraid;
At no man's question Isaac looked dismayed:
Shame knew him not, he dreaded no disgrace;
Truth, simple truth, was written in his face:
Yet while the serious thought his soul approved,
Cheerful he seemed, and gentleness he loved,
To bliss domestic he his heart resigned,
And with the firmest had the fondest mind.

* * * * * *

In times severe, when many a sturdy swain
Felt it his pride, his comfort, to complain;
Isaac their wants would soothe, his own would hide,
And feel in *that* his comfort and his pride.
At length he found, when seventy years were run,
His strength departed, and his labour done;
When he, save honest fame, retained no more,
But lost his wife, and saw his children poor;
'Twas then a spark of—say not discontent—
Struck on his mind, and thus he gave it vent:—
'Kind are your laws ('tis not to be denied),
That in yon house, for ruined age, provide,
And they are just; when young, we give you all,
And for assistance in our weakness call.
Why then this proud reluctance to be fed,
To join your poor, and eat the parish bread?
But yet I linger, loth with him to feed
Who gains his plenty by the sons of need;

He who, by contract, all your paupers took,
And guages stomachs with an anxious look:
On some old master I could well depend;
See him with joy, and thank him as a friend:
But ill on him who doles the day's supply,
And counts our chances who at night may die:
Yet help me Heaven! and let me not complain
Of what I suffer, but my fate sustain.'
Such were his thoughts, and so resigned he grew;
Daily he placed the workhouse in his view!
But came not there, for sudden was his fate,
He dropped, expiring, at his cottage gate.

I cannot but think that, if a few of the aged Irish peasantry who are unable to pay their rent, and are too old to emigrate, could be received in almshouses, with a small weekly allowance to buy their own food, and not separated from their wives, it would be a provision not indeed properly chargeable on poor-rates, but becoming the liberality and justice of the nation.

The other class consists of young children who, by the fault or misfortune of their parents, receive their food and education in the workhouse.

In Ireland the convents, whose inmates, abounding in charity, are impelled by their love of God to minister to the helpless sick, and no less helpless children, with a zeal and a kindness which cannot be too much commended, might, if duly assisted by the State, afford the means of giving both to infants and to girls of a critical time of life, that instruction in religion, and those habits of cleanliness and household industry, which may afterwards enable them to make the Irish cabin more nearly resemble the English cottage.

Supposing Mr. Gladstone to have determined on a plan for the application of the funds to be derived from the disendowment of the Irish branch of the Established Church, there is one general remark which—although it would not escape your notice—may as well be placed here.

Archbishop Whately repeatedly expresses his conviction that the life of the Irish clergyman would be in danger if, at his death, some immediate benefit were to accrue to the Irish peasantry. But this danger may be easily avoided. Supposing, for example, it were estimated that the life interest of the Irish clergy would last for thirty years, and that about 20,000*l.* might be taken as the yearly average, it would be easy to constitute a fund from which 18,000*l.* a year should be devoted to three bodies named in the Act. If the lives which fell during the year should yield a yearly income of 20,000*l.*, 2,000*l.* would accrue to the fund for the purposes of accumulation. If those deaths should give only 16,000*l.*, the sum of 2,000*l.* might well be advanced by the Treasury, to be afterwards repaid by the fund. If the payment were thus constant, no Irish clergyman would be waylaid and murdered by the peasantry for the sake of improving the income of the Imperial Exchequer. An Irish peasant is not enthusiastic on behalf of the British Treasury. There is another observation which no doubt has occurred to you, and will be enforced by you upon your colleagues. The fund derived from the disendowment of the Church will be strictly an Irish fund, derived from Irish sources, from the charge on

Irish industry, and the income of Irish lands; it must therefore be honestly applied to the improvement of Ireland. For my part, seeing that a great part of the country is still—compared to France, Italy, or Germany—barbarous and uncivilised, I am of opinion that nothing would so greatly benefit Ireland as the moral improvement of her people, the cessation of religious inequality, and the teaching of those lessons of meekness, charity, and peace, which Christ commanded to be taught to all nations. The Irish parishes may think that the reduction of poor-rates is a more important object; but I should be sorry to see the Government take the lead in such a course.

At all events, however, let the objects be Irish. My opinion is that, when a sum equal to the present rent charge has been applied by Parliament to the objects which I have mentioned, and the owners of Church patronage have received a fair but moderate compensation for the loss of their advowsons, any surplus that may remain, be it larger or smaller, might be usefully applied to purposes of which I will speak in a later part of this letter.

I will now sum up the conclusions at which I have endeavoured to arrive.

1. That at a certain date to be named—say March 1870—the Established Church of Ireland shall cease to exist as an Establishment, due regard being had to all personal interests and to all individual rights of property.

2. That in the interval the Irish Church should, by means of a convocation or such other mode as may

be deemed most advisable, frame a scheme for its organisation as a Free Church.

3. That to this Free Church should be assigned such cathedrals and parish churches as may have been chiefly built by voluntary Protestant contributions, and such lands and glebes as the present Established Church may produce equitable claims to retain.

4. That to the cathedrals, churches, lands, and glebes thus retained, should be added a sum to be derived from the Church lands and rent charges, the amount of which shall be fixed by Parliament.

5. That property, equal in amount to that retained by the Protestant Episcopal Church, shall be assigned to the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic people of Ireland for purposes to be defined by Parliament, to be administered in the case of the Presbyterians by the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and in the case of the Roman Catholics by the Roman Catholic members of the Board of Charitable Bequests, already constituted by Act of Parliament, with numbers enlarged—say to fifteen or twenty-five.

6. That the funds to be so applied shall be derived from a fund, designated by Parliament the Irish Fund, and that the amount applied from year to year shall be fixed, and shall not vary according to the rate of mortality among the existing clergy of the Established Church.

7. That the building and repair of Presbyterian and Roman Catholic places of worship, and dwelling-houses for their respective clergy, shall be among

27492

the purposes to which the funds to be assigned to Presbyterians and Roman Catholics shall be applied.

8. That the remainder of the funds to be derived from the disendowment of the present Established Church shall be applied by Parliament, from time to time, solely to Irish purposes. That with this view the fund, called the Irish Fund, shall never be diverted to purposes other than the welfare and improvement of Ireland.

I should like to add to these heads a declaration that the present national system of education in Ireland, by which upwards of 900,000 children are enrolled in the National Schools, should be maintained. But that is a separate question, and must be separately discussed. I can therefore only express my individual hope that no measure so fatal to the future peace and harmony of Ireland as the introduction of the denominational system will ever be sanctioned by Parliament. It is the favourite scheme of those who wish to disunite Great Britain and Ireland.

There is another question which, according to the Resolutions of the late House of Commons, must be bound up with the solution of that of the Irish Church. I mean the provision made by Act of Parliament for the College of Maynooth, and by yearly grant for the Presbyterian clergy. I should be sorry to suppose that anyone wished to save 70,000*l.* a year by the pacification of Ireland; far higher objects are in view. It must be recollected, besides, that these grants have been made from views of Imperial policy, and not solely for the benefit of the Irish people. It was

supposed by the Protestant House of Commons, before the Union, that it was desirable to give the priests a domestic instead of a foreign education. So likewise with regard to the Presbyterian clergy; it was thought expedient, first by William III., and at a later time by Lord Castlereagh, to knit to the State the dissenting Protestant bodies by means of grants from the Imperial Exchequer.

The best course, as it appears to me, will be to respect life interests, as in the case of the Established Church, and afterwards to throw the two sums into the Irish Fund, and dispose of them according to the same rules.

I cannot avoid, in this third letter on the state of Ireland, treating somewhat at large on the land question.

I observe in a work of the late Mr. Senior a constant repetition of a remark, fortified by the declaration of a dying squireen, that it is very possible, nay, easy, for a landlord to enforce the payment of rents, and even to raise the amount of rent to the most grinding extent, without giving offence; but that, if a landlord attempts to improve, he must give up all hopes of tranquillity, and even of safety for his life. This appears to be, if unexplained, a very perverse disposition on the part of Irish tenants. But what is meant by the payment of rents is that the tenant should be called upon to pay that which he has agreed to pay, keeping his cabin and his bit of land. What is meant by improvement is that the tenant should be deprived of the roof which gives him shelter, and the bit of land

which gives him food, often without any resource, any compensation for his outlay, or any means of procuring a livelihood. I speak, of course, of the time before the introduction of the Poor Law, which at least affords some means of procuring food and shelter.

I now proceed to the case of the landlords and the tenants as explained by Mr. Trench, in his 'Realities of Irish Life,' and I think it will show that if in past times the duties of landlords were not always performed, their rights had been at least as much neglected. Here is the account of the estate of the Marquis of Lansdowne, in the union of Kenmare, when Mr. Trench first became acquainted with it:—

The estate of the Marquis of Lansdowne, in the union of Kenmare, had at this time been much neglected by its local manager. It consists of about sixty thousand acres, and comprises nearly one-third of the whole union. No restraint whatever had been put upon the subdivision of land. Boys and girls intermarried unchecked at the age of seventeen or eighteen, without thinking it necessary to make any provision whatever for their future subsistence, beyond a shed to lie down in, and a small plot of land whereon to grow potatoes. Innumerable squatters had settled themselves unquestioned in huts on the mountain sides and in the valleys, without any sufficient provision for their maintenance during the year. They sowed their patch of potatoes early in spring, using sea weed alone as manure. Then, as the scarce seasons of spring and summer came on, they nailed up the doors of their huts, took all their children along with them, together with a few tin cans, and started on a migratory and piratical expedition over the counties of Kerry and Cork, trusting to their adroitness and good luck in begging to keep the family

alive till the potato crop again came in; and thus, in consequence of the neglect or supineness of the agent, who, in direct violation of his lordship's instructions, and without his knowledge, allowed numbers of strangers and young married couples to settle on his estate, paying no rent, and almost without any visible means of subsistence, not only the finances, but the character and condition of the property were at a very low ebb indeed; the estate, in fact, was swamped with paupers.*

Mr. Trench, at a later period, accepted the agency of the estate of the Marquis of Bath, in the county of Monaghan. He made one special condition, of which he gives the following account:—

It is unnecessary here to say more than that I made it one special condition—heartily acquiesced in by Lady Bath—that I should not be required to eject any tenant off the estate without being at liberty to provide for him by emigration or otherwise at the landlord's expense; and thus that no one should be turned out in misery on the road-side or into the poor-house without at least the offer being made him of providing for himself and family by free emigration to America. On Lord Bath's estate the tenants had been allowed to fall into heavy arrears, so that not less than 30,000*l.* was due upon the estate when I undertook its management. Many of the tenants had not paid any rent whatever for periods varying from two to six years.

Another estate placed under the management of Mr. Trench was that of Lord Digby, called the Geashill Estate, and of the state of this property the following account is given by him:—

* The character of the property and of Lord Lansdowne as a landlord were much injured by these paupers, who gave themselves out as 'Lord Lansdowne's tenants,' and begged their way in this character through the south of Ireland.

The tenantry, both leaseholders and others, had been allowed to run deeply into arrears. Many of them owed three, five, and some even up to ten and twelve years' rent —an amount which, it is needless to say, they were totally unable to pay.

Having thus stated from Mr. Trench's reports the case of the landlords, it is necessary to observe that it will not do to dismiss such cases with the superficial remark that the laws are the same in Ireland as in England; that, if the landlord has allowed his rents to fall into arrear, it is his business to collect them, and that a yearly tenant, having no lease, if he cannot pay his arrears of rent, has nothing to do but to suffer an ejectment.

In the first place, the practice of England, where the building and substantial repairs of a farm-house and appurtenances fall upon the landlord, is almost unknown in Ireland. Thus, the tenant having occupied the land for some years without payment of rent, having built his house by his own labour and that of his family—and, being animated, moreover, by the feeling that the English landlord is an alien and an intruder—is encouraged to think that he can hold out against the law and its agents. The terms used by Joe M'Key, a tenant of Lord Bath, who resisted with violence any payment of rent, may be taken as a specimen of the language which a refractory tenant will use to the agent of his landlord. Mr. Trench said:—

'You owe five years' rent, you will pay nothing, and I hear you have sworn to shoot any one who attempts to arrest you.'

After some talk about the handle of a horse-pistol which he had used to frighten the bailiffs, Mr. Trench said:—

'You know well that you keep the whole country at bay, and no one dares take you.'

The answer was:—

'And why should they take me? or, what I think worse of, why should they want to take my little place? I built the most of this house myself. Look at the garden there,' he continued, as he flung open a back door; 'I have planted every stick, and I have raised every stone, and they hunt me now to give up my little place, and I will never give it up, but with my life.'

Perhaps now the reader can understand how a tenant should be tempted to resist an 'improvement' which is to drive him penniless into the world, from a home where he has placed every stone and planted every stick. Perhaps a reader used to English property will also understand the difference between an English and an Irish tenancy.

Any one who wishes to learn more must consult Mr. Trench's book, and thereby become acquainted with the firmness and the kindness, the liberality and the courage, by which Mr. Trench overcame ribbon conspirators and defaulting tenants, converting the unwholesome waste—which was scarcely cultivated by swarms of miserable squatters—into fertile districts, the abode of comfort, of cleanliness, of order, and of prosperity.

But it is not every Irish landlord who has at his command the means by which the English

absentee landlords, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Bath, and Lord Digby, were enabled to furnish funds for emigration to the hopeless tenants, and to execute works of drainage, construction of houses, and repairing of fences. Yet, although the marvellous transformations which their agent has described cannot be generally expected, it is probable that more may be effected by the gradual conversion of bad landlords into good, and careless proprietors into careful managers, than can be done by any sudden effects of legislation.

There are some amendments of the law, however, which appear to me possible; and I throw them out rather for your consideration than as the mature results of reflection.

It appears, from what I hear, that the ordinary letting is neither that of leasehold nor of tenancy at will, but that of yearly tenancy. This can only be put an end to by serving a six months' notice to quit, which notice must terminate upon the day upon which the tenancy originally commenced; and in default of such commencement of tenancy being legally ascertained, the law assumes that the tenancy ends on the winter rent-day. In such case, the ejectment is tried in the following January Sessions; if the rent-day ends in summer, the ejectment is tried in the July Sessions. In case of ejectment on notice to quit, the tenant has not any appeal from the decree of the Court. In ejectments for non-payment of rent, under lease, or on a yearly tenancy, the tenant has six months to redeem, on payment of the rent due and costs.

The tenant has not an appeal to any Court for

compensation for money expended by him on the holding during his tenancy. It appears to me that it might be enacted—

1. That every tenancy less than a yearly tenancy should hereafter be by law a yearly tenancy.

2. That upon hearing the case the tenant might bring forward evidence to show the improvements he had made on his farm, and the buildings which he had erected at his own expense.

3. That upon hearing this case the Chairman of Quarter Sessions should be authorised by law to accompany his decree by an award compelling the payment of compensation for the value of the improvements made, and the buildings erected, or granting the tenant power equivalent to what is called tenant-right, of selling the goodwill of his farm to any other person. The Chairman might also, I think, be empowered to quash the ejectment, and to direct the grant of a twenty-one years' lease by the landlord, in terms to be settled by the Judge. I do not presume, however, to say that this power should be vested absolutely in the Chairman of Quarter Sessions. To find an impartial tribunal for such cases, without a jury, is one of the greatest difficulties of Irish legislation.

I consider it necessary, above all things, to enact—

4. That any contract between landlord and tenant, by which the tenant agrees to give up his holding on any other terms than those in force in the case of a lease or of a yearly tenancy, shall be utterly illegal, and *ipso facto* void. Whatever may be the tribunal to which the question of compensation should be referred, and

whatever powers may be given to that tribunal, it is absolutely necessary that the power of sudden and arbitrary removal should be taken away. No person should be able to ask for the assistance of the law in enforcing that abuse of the rights of property which Mr. Scully, with such lamentable effects, tried to exercise. This would hardly be, in regard to tenants, so great a change as was made in this country by the 12 of C. II. as to military or feudal tenures in regard to landlords.

There still remain, from time to time, cases of great hardship, covered over by the plausible name of improvement. Much forbearance, a kindly spirit, and a postponement of improvement—in preference to the banishment of poor men, with their wives and families, from lands which for years have furnished them their only subsistence—is surely no more than humanity requires.

At a dinner that was given by the Marquis of Bath to his tenantry, Mr. Trench said:—

'Often and often I have proposed to some of the smallest holders to pay their full passage-money to America, to allow them to take all their stock and crop along with them, if they would only leave the poor worn-out land, that I might consolidate it with a neighbour's holding; but no, I can't get them to stir; and though a few young men and women leave occasionally to better themselves, yet anything like emigration from the estate—to call it such—is utterly unknown here now, and has been for many years past. I confess I should like a little more elbow-room on the estate; but as they won't go, it is at least satisfactory to see that they are not yet tired of your lordship.'

In an address presented to Lord Bath on a previous day, the tenantry recalled to mind with approbation the axiom of Mr. Drummond, that property has its duties as well as its rights. Those duties consist very much in offices of kindness and goodwill. It is with the warmest satisfaction that I have seen on many Irish estates the wife of the landlord busily engaged in performing those acts of goodwill which bring peace and happiness along with them, and inspire unbounded love and gratitude to their benefactors, whether Saxon or Celt.

Yet confidence is a plant of slow growth, not only, as Lord Chatham said, in an aged bosom, but also in a nation which has been used for centuries to oppression and contempt. Many years ago a lady who, during the minority of her son, presided over a house in one of the most beautiful situations in Ireland, told me that, having observed one morning from her dressing-room an English gentleman, her guest at the time, in eager conversation with a person employed in the management of the estate, she said to him afterwards, 'That English gentleman seemed to be asking you a great many questions?' 'Sure he did, ma'am,' the man replied; 'but I took care not to tell him a word of truth.'

This ancient weapon of the weak oppressed against the strong oppressor is, I fear, still in use in Ireland; and many English travellers hear stories intended to please or to beguile them, while the enquirers imagine they are collecting valuable information as to the state of the country.

It is not, therefore, merely by laws, or the recognition of equality, that England can now hope to make Ireland a part of her strength, and an affectionate member of her family. The contest for the repeal of the Union is no longer a serious question. It is well understood that so long as the empire exists in her might and in her majesty, she will never permit such a dismemberment as the repeal of the Union would imply. But if Great Britain is firmly resolved to maintain the Union, she ought to be no less determined to perform her promises, in compliance with its spirit, than to enforce the letter of her bond. Mr. Fox expressed, in terms never to be forgotten, his opinion of the Irish people.

This nation (Great Britain) was to reap marvellous blessings from the union, but of what benefit is the junction of four or five millions of traitors? Such, the laws proposed by these honorable gentlemen tell you the Irish are—but such I tell you they are not. A grosser outrage upon truth, a greater libel upon a generous people, never before was uttered or insinuated. They who can find reason for all this, in any supposed depravity of the Irish, totally misunderstand their character. Sir, I love the Irish nation. I know a good deal of that people. I know much of Ireland from having seen it; I know more from private friendship with individuals. The Irish may have their faults, like others; they may have a quick feeling of injury, and not be very patient under it; but I do affirm that, of all their characteristics, there is not one feature more predominant, in every class of the country, from the highest to the lowest order, than gratitude for benefactions, and sensibility to kindness. Change your system towards that country, and you will

find them another sort of men — let impartiality, justice, and clemency take the place of prejudice, oppression, and vengeance, and you will not want the aid of martial law, or the terror of military execution.*

I will now give the opinion of Mr. Burke upon a question very similar to that which we are now discussing:—

It is a great truth, and which, in one of the debates, I stated as strongly as I could, to the House of Commons in the last session, that if the Catholic religion is destroyed by the infidels, it is a most contemptible and absurd idea, that this, or any Protestant Church, can survive that event. Therefore, my humble and decided opinion is that all the three religions prevalent more or less in these islands, ought all, in subordination to the legal establishments, as they stand in the several countries, to be all countenanced, protected, and cherished; and that in Ireland particularly, the Roman Catholic religion should be upheld in high respect and veneration; and should be, in its place, provided with all the means of making it a blessing to the people who profess it; that it ought to be cherished as a good (though not as the most preferable good, if a choice was now to be made), and not tolerated as an inevitable evil.†

If Mr. Burke's view is sound, it is as sound in 1868 as it was in 1795; and in making a comparison with the present time, the Fenians of to-day may well represent the Infidels of yesterday. It must be said in fairness, however, that both Mr. Burke and Mr. Pitt wished to maintain the Irish Protestant Church. But times have changed; and if ecclesiastical equality is to be reached, it must be reached by

* *Fox's Speeches*, vol. vi. p. 448.

† Letter to William Smith, Esq.; *Burke's Works*, vol. ix. p. 406.

other roads than those which were practicable in 1795 and 1801.

It is not for me to enter into details, which must be submitted to Parliament by Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues; but it may be as well that, rather in the way of elucidation than in that of positive recommendation, I should indicate once more the sort of steps which I should be disposed to take were Parliament willing to accept my proposals.

I should, in the first place, give to an Irish Convocation, or very numerous commission of Irish bishops, clergymen, and laity, the power to frame a plan by which the Free Church of Ireland would be organised, and to ask the sanction of Parliament for that organisation. There are two ways in which the power thus given might be exercised. The Convocation might wish to insert an article submitting in future all disputes respecting doctrine or discipline to the Judicial Committee of Privy Council; and the Irish clergy might choose to bind themselves to submit to a regulation which would thus keep the Irish Voluntary Church, as to doctrine and discipline, in harmony with the Established Church of England. Some have suggested that they might even propose to leave the nomination of bishops in the Queen; but this would be too like Establishment; and the power is of no use to the Crown, exercised, as it always is, by the Irish Government. Domestic nomination, giving a veto to the Primate, would be far better. But the Commission or Irish Convocation might prefer to reserve

complete freedom as to doctrine and discipline, in the manner now adopted by the Episcopal Church of Scotland, and by some of our Colonial Churches.

Upon these points I should be disposed to give, and I think Parliament ought to give, the utmost freedom to the Voluntary Church. If we send the vessel out to find her own path across the ocean, it is but fair that the rigging should be adjusted by those who are to navigate her; and that the officers should not be restrained as to the trim of the ship.

With respect to the endowment and present revenue of the Irish Church, I find these two paragraphs in the report of the Established Church (Ireland) Commission.

The Irish branch of the United Church of England and Ireland consists of two archbishops, ten bishops, thirty corporations of deans and chapters, twelve minor corporations or quasi-corporate bodies connected with cathedrals, thirty-two deans, thirty-three archdeacons, 1,509 beneficed incumbents (including within this term perpetual curates), and more than 500 stipendiary curates. The number of persons returned by the census of 1861 as belonging to its communion was 693,357.

Its annual nett revenues amount to about 581,000*l.*, of which about 364,000*l.* arise from tithe rent charge, about 204,000*l.* from the rents received from lands, and the residue from Government stock or other sources. Of these revenues a considerable proportion, about 113,000*l.* a year, is administered for church purposes by the central Board of Ecclesiastical Commissioners. About 19,000*l.* a year belongs to the capitular bodies, and is applied by them for the maintenance of the cathedral fabrics and services. The residue supplies

the endowments of the bishops, dignitaries, and beneficed clergy.

In a table, marked 'Table 28,' of the Summary Tables, I find that the average nett income of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for Ireland is 113,662*l.*, and that the expenses of the Establishment are estimated at 13,000*l.*, leaving about 100,000*l.* as nett income applicable to the purposes defined by Act of Parliament.

Having these facts before us, accurately ascertained by a Royal Commission, and bearing in mind the obligation to provide life incomes, and the necessity of granting compensation to the private holders of church patronage, and bearing also in mind the objection stated by Archbishop Whateley, and the means I have pointed out of obviating it, I should proceed to provide, as an ultimate result—

1. That a sum of 360,000*l.* a year, derived partly from tithe rent charge, and partly from leases and church lands, should be divided into three portions: one to be assigned to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of the Protestant Episcopal Church; one to the Roman Catholic, and one to the Presbyterian Church, for purposes strictly defined by Parliament. From these purposes should be excluded any general permanent endowment for the clergy of any one of the three denominations. But assistance in land or money to the clergy of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communions, where the district is poor, or the circumstances exceptional, should not be excluded from the permitted purposes.

There will still remain, according to the Report to which I have referred, a further sum, which may be stated roughly to amount ultimately to 200,000*l.* a year.

I think it would hardly be wise to apply this disposable fund to the reduction of poor-rates. It is very desirable that poor-rates should be left as a local charge, and that good management and economy should be enforced by a local burden.

But there is a purpose which is now partly provided for by loans and grants of Parliament—the improvement of the land by drainage, and other works. I have mentioned Mr. Trench's report on Lord Digby's estate of Geashill Manor. He describes it as having been formerly one of the most wretched and discouraging in Ireland, abounding in squatters' mud hovels, and moors saturated with water; some of these moors were of the worst description, lying on a barren and retentive subsoil.

The fields had been so cut up and subdivided that it became necessary to lay out all the lands anew, to level the old fences, square and enlarge the fields, and sink a deep drain, almost amounting to a canal, to carry off the waters from this extensive district. All this was done with much care and accuracy, but the lands were naturally of so unfertile a quality that it became necessary to till them thoroughly to bring them to an even texture, and lay them down in good heart with grass seed of first-rate quality. This was done at considerable cost, and turnips, potatoes, wheat, and oats, were all grown most successfully by means of a large application of Peruvian guano, generally seven to eight cwt. to the Irish acre. The crops were enormously large, and well repaid the cost of their production.

The cost of this and other measures of improvement have amounted to a total of 32,725*l.*

I will now give an extract from the minutes of evidence taken before the Select Committee on the 'Tenure of Land (Ireland) Bill,' relating to another estate:—

> On another estate, situated in the south of Ireland (Marquis of Lansdowne's), the rental of which is about 11,000*l.* per annum, there has been expended within the last seventeen years, on drainage and land improvement, 8,829*l.*; on buildings and repairs of tenants' houses, 13,393*l.*; on compensation for surrender of tenements, 3,948*l.*; on emigration (4,616 persons), 17,059*l.*; and on sundry improvements, not included in the above, 11,129*l.*; making a total in seventeen years of 54,358*l.*; average, inclusive of emigration, 3,197*l.*; average, exclusive of emigration, 2,194*l.*
>
> The number of new houses built on this estate (by the proprietor) within the above period has been about fifty.

It is, however, as I have already hinted, out of the question that the smaller proprietors of Ireland, whether resident in Ireland or absentees, should undertake large works of the extent and efficiency comparable to those executed under the direction of an intelligent agent like Mr. Trench, entrusted with the purse of three wealthy and liberal noblemen. It seems desirable, therefore, that the State should advance, on easy terms, loans to the landlords and tenants who are desirous to improve, but have not the means of doing so. We have in Ireland an excellent Board of Works, which has shown itself fully equal to the performance of all the duties that have been imposed upon it. If, therefore, there should

remain from the disendowment of the Irish Church any vacant funds, I do not think they can be better employed than in the improvement of the land of Ireland.

I shall be met here, I am aware, by the objection that drainage is a work purely secular, and that sacred funds should be applied solely to sacred uses. But I answer, first, by an ingenious analogy of a Spanish Bishop of Osma, of a past age. He said, in effect:—'Let it be granted that the church is the noblest part of the nation, as the eyes are the noblest part of the human body; yet no man, in order to have three pair of eyes, would sacrifice his pair of arms and pair of legs.'

I answer, secondly, by the practical example of Spain in the last century, when the influence of the Church was almost unlimited. At that very time, as appears by Coxe's 'Memoirs of the Kings of Spain,' the property of the Church, the prebends and dignities, were charged with the payment of pensions to officers of the royal army. A more secular purpose could not well be. Reason tells us, moreover, that if the welfare of the people of Ireland will be promoted by devoting the rents of church lands to the improvement of lands belonging to laymen, idle superstitions should not stand in the way of the *salus populi*. Indeed, the giving a cup of cold water to a little child, which Christ has described as giving it unto Him, might be accounted a secular act; yet he who does so in Christ's name, shall in nowise lose his reward.

It is impossible to travel through Ireland without seeing evidently that there are many marshes that might be drained, much bog-land that might be reclaimed, and thousands of acres now producing scanty and uncertain crops, which, by the judicious application of manure, might reward the husbandman by large and abundant returns, both of corn and of green crops. I remember, five-and-thirty years ago, traversing a large estate, respecting which the owner told me that he had but one tenant on his estate who grew turnips. The state of Ireland has greatly improved since that time, in every respect. These improvements are thus summed up by Lord Mayo, in his speech of March 10, 1868.

> Let the House now consider what has taken place since the commencement of the new policy which this country has pursued towards Ireland since 1824–5, the date of the first educational inquiry. In 1829, the Roman Catholic Relief Bill was passed; a short time afterwards a system of national education was adopted; a system of police which has been found excellent and useful was created; the constitution of juries was altered and greatly improved; the fiscal powers of grand juries were regulated; municipalities were reformed and placed upon a different footing; the Poor Law was established; the landed Estates Court was created for the sale of encumbered property. In fine, it is beyond a doubt that a greater number of beneficial measures were never carried in any country within so short a period of time. Professor Ingram has truly remarked that changes so great, and made within so short a period, constitute the largest peaceful revolution in the history of the world.

This general statement is corroborated by the

detailed returns, which Lord Mayo produced in the course of his able and instructive speech.

There is no good to be derived from exaggerating the oppression and mismanagement of Ireland. The penal laws of William III. and Anne no longer exist. The battle between the House of Stuart and the House of Hanover has been fought, and has been decided in favour of our cause. We may now say, like Diomed—

> Nec mihi cum Teucris ullum post eruta bellum
> Pergama, nec veterum memini lætorve malorum.

Since 1829 progress has been made, not only by legislative measures, but by impartial administration. Lord de Grey, Lord Heytesbury, Lord Eglinton, and the Duke of Abercorn, have not made themselves the tools of the Orange faction; they have endeavoured to govern fairly and impartially; but of the forty years which have elapsed since January 1829, about thirty have been years of liberal administration; and it is during those years that most of the legislative and social improvements have been made which Lord Mayo so fairly commemorates. It was during those years also that Roman Catholics have not only been eligible to judicial and political offices, but have been actually appointed to such offices—a course fitly completed in Ireland by the nomination of a Roman Catholic Chancellor. Lord Normanby, Lord Fortescue, and Lord Carlisle, have been the fit exponents of this liberal policy.

Two monster grievances, however, remain. The

Irish Church is in the enjoyment of a property which was forcibly taken from the Roman Catholic Church after more than three hundred years of lawful possession, and was given to a small, and not very respectable, portion of the inhabitants of Ireland. The conduct of the clergy has immensely improved; but seven-eighths of the people of Ireland refuse its ministrations.

The other grievance consists in the abuse of the rights of property by the owners of the land. *Summum jus, summa injuria.* A landlord drives a hundred tenants out of their holdings, strips the roofs off the houses they have built, and leaves them, at best, to the mercies of the Poor Law. This is called improvement; and men wonder that such treatment should expose the landlord or his agent to the pistol of the assassin.

But Mr. Trench says truly:—

> The reader of the English newspaper is shocked at the list of children murdered by professional assassins, of wives murdered by their husbands, of men murdered for their gold. In Ireland that dreadful crime may almost invariably be traced to a wild feeling of revenge for the national wrongs to which so many of her sons believe that she has been subjected for centuries.

The deliberations of the Government to which you belong must be directed to find the proper, the substantial, and the permanent remedies for these two great evils. I feel sure that Mr. Gladstone will not recklessly introduce a measure affecting deeply the welfare of the United Kingdom merely that it may

not be said that he has served as a stop-gap. I feel confident that he will not propose to the two Houses of Parliament to take a leap in the dark. He knows too well his duty to his Sovereign, who has called him to the head of affairs, and to the country which willingly entrusts her destines to his hands. I admire the prudence with which, at some sacrifice, he has refrained from expounding to the electors of the United Kingdom a regular plan for the distribution of the revenues of the Irish Church. The pacification of Ireland is a great object, but one which requires the deepest consideration on the part of those who, free from the dangers, and exempt from the angry passions of past ages, are called upon to consolidate this great empire—to complete that which Mr. Pitt left undone in 1801, and which the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel were only half able to accomplish in 1829. You, and others entrusted by your Sovereign with the government of Ireland, will, I am sure, give your able assistance in this work; the narrow prejudices, the selfish interests, and the violent antipathies which have disgraced our late elections, will fade in the presence of a settlement founded on the principles of wisdom and of justice. The wreath *ob civem servatum*, will be a million times deserved by the minister who shall knit together three nations, to be bound hereafter by a common feeling of loyalty to the Crown, and of enduring affection to the institutions of the country which gave them birth.

There are three works, which I have already mentioned; but I am so impressed with their importance and their value to any person who wishes to arrive at his conclusions on solid grounds, that I make a special reference to them before I close this letter. The first is:—

'Journals, Observations, and Essays relating to Ireland. By Nassau William Senior.' This work contains, besides several able essays published in the 'Edinburgh Review,' the opinions of Lord Monteagle, Lord Rosse, and others, as landlords, and of Archbishop Whateley as an enlightened churchman.

It was Archbishop Whateley who said that the clergy, in a time of danger to the Church, were like horses in a stable that was on fire. They are not wiser, I fear, than they were in his day.

The next work I shall mention is:—

'The Irish Church. By W. Bence Jones, M.A.' This is a pamphlet of ordinary size, but it contains an able statement of the difficulties which beset any attempt to redress the grievance of the Irish Church.

The third work to which I wish to call attention is the more valuable on account of what it professes to contain, namely:—

'The Realities of Irish Life. By W. Trench.' The narrative is most interesting, and the views of Irish character most instructive; the mode of managing a large estate described with great power; and with all this there is nothing of a didactic form or dry theory. The stories of 'Mary Shea,' 'Alice M'Mahon,'

and 'Catherine Farnan,' are, each in its way, very striking, and, as Mr. Trench says:—

Joe M'Key was a hero in his way, and by no means devoid of noble qualities.

A few words before I conclude. Let us suppose that, by the end of the Session of 1870, the Irish Church and the Irish Land questions are, by the consummate wisdom of Parliament, satisfactorily settled.

Is everything accomplished?

By no means. The great art of administration, as Napoleon justly called it, has to be exercised with mildness, with benevolence, with sympathy for the Irish people; but still with firmness, with strict justice, with an authority incapable of being either intimidated or cajoled.

It will be a long time before Ireland can be governed in the slovenly manner in which the internal government of England is now administered. Where the spirit of insurrection appears in a habit of murdering landlords, agents, and obnoxious tenants, the people of the district must be deprived of arms, and Special Commissions of able judges must administer to offenders speedy and stern justice.

But let not the Irish suppose that their portion of the United Kingdom is to be darkened by the permanent absence of the rays of the Royal presence. Let the Prince of Wales appear in your country for two or three months annually, with 25,000*l.* a year added

to his income from the public revenue; and I am sure you will not be offended when I say that no Lord-Lieutenant, no Chief Secretary, can do more to win the heart of the Irish people to permanent ties with England than the genial smile of the Heir to the Crown.

When the great work of conciliation has been, in spite of unjust aspersions, and unfounded calumnies, gloriously accomplished, Mr. Gladstone may take to himself the consolation of Dante, that his life travels into the future, far beyond the mark to which the arrows of his enemies can reach, and he may say, proudly—

> If I'm traduced by tongues which neither know
> My faculties, nor person, yet will be
> The chronicles of my doing—let me say,
> 'Tis but the fate of place, and the rough brake
> That virtue must go through.

I remain,

My dear Fortescue,

Yours faithfully,

RUSSELL.

PEMBROKE LODGE:
January 18, 1869.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 June, 2018